

534
THE WORKS OF CHRIST IN CREATION AND
PROVIDENCE, EXECUTED BY INFINITE WISDOM
AND GOODNESS: PART OF

ILLUSTRATED
IN A
FUNERAL SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

MRS. SARAH LEAVITT,

THE VIRTUOUS AND AMIABLE CONSORT OF THE

REV. MR. JONATHAN LEAVITT,

Who died suddenly, at HEATH, October 11th, in
the 49th year of her age.

By JOHN EMERSON, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN CONWAY. K

Rev. xv. 3. *Great and marvelous are thy works Lord
God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou
King of Saints.*

Prov. x. 7. *The memory of the just is blessed.*

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TO THE

REVEREND JONATHAN LEAVITT

AND CHILDREN,

[THE FOLLOWING

FUNERAL SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF

Mrs. LEAVITT,

IS INSCRIBED

THEIR SYMPATHISING FRIEND

AND SERVANT,

JOHN EMERSON.



FUNERAL SERMON

MARK vii, 37.

—HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.—

THIS testimony in favor of a particular act, wrought by our Saviour in the days of his flesh, is true not only of that instance of his power; but of all his works in general we may say "*he doth all things well.*"

HENCE these words may be considered as expressing the perfect wisdom, righteousness and goodness which are displayed in all the acts and administrations of the SON of GOD.

A TRUTH that will be found replete with solid comfort and joy to all real christians, even in times of deepest adversity.

It may therefore be a profitable subject of our serious meditations on the present mournful occasion.

IN order for a clear illustration of the doctrine, and to impress our minds with some suitable conceptions of it, it may be proper to take a brief survey of the doings of CHRIST, as exhibited in creation and providence, and shew how all these are executed in perfect wisdom and goodness. This will lead to reflections tending to regulate our temper and practice in respect to the operations of that Almighty Agent.

"The

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out by all those who have pleasure therein." The devout psalmist when contemplating the visible creation, not only admires the multitude of GOD's works, but celebrates his wisdom in the formation of them. *"How manifold are thy works, O Lord! in wisdom hast thou made them all!"**

THE works of creation are in scripture expressly ascribed to CHRIST. When it is said, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,"* we are to understand GOD the SON; in concurrence indeed with the other persons of the sacred trinity: For the evangelist John informs us, that *"in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."* It follows, *"all things were made by him: And without him was not any thing made that was made."*† And *"by him,"* saith the Apostle, *"were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth visible and invisible, all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."*‡

It was then the eternal logos—that word who was made flesh and dwelt among men—who framed the universe—who spake the world into being—who said, *"let there be light and there was light"*—who *"prepared the heavens and the earth, and set a compass upon the face of the deep—who made the sun to rule the day and the moon and stars to rule the night"*—placed those bright luminaries in the firmament above, and *"ordained them for signs and seasons, for days and years"*—who *"gave the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment."* Whose word of power produced the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and all the flocks which range the fields; who at last formed man, the most excellent of these creatures, out of the dust, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and gave him to have dominion over all this lower creation.

WHEN

* Psalm civ. 24. † John i. 1, 2, 3. ‡ Col. i. 16, 17.

WHEN this world was created—when it was finished, and thus furnished it was perfectly well made, the stupendous work was executed, after the model of infinite wisdom.

THE creator on a review of his works, pronounced them all *very good*.—not a flaw in the whole creation; each creature perfect in its kind, and admirably fitted to the place and use for which it was designed. The world, in short, exhibited a system of consummate order, harmony, and beauty. The view of which, struck the angelic hosts with pleasing wonder, and produced joint acclamations of joy. For then it was that those "*morning stars sang together, and all those Sons of God shouted for joy.*"

WHATEVER of defect or disorder has since taken place in the natural and moral world, is occasioned by the sin of man, and cannot be attributed to the failure of wisdom, power, or goodness in the creator.

BUT the present subject leads us to attend more especially to the works of providence.

THESE are likewise the works of CHRIST, and are executed with perfect wisdom, equity, and goodness. In providence as well as creation, he hath performed, doth and will perform all "*things well.*"

I SHALL endeavour distinctly to illustrate and evince this remark, by shewing

THAT the government of the world is in the hands of CHRIST—that this providential dominion and government is universal, and that it is administered in the best manner.

I. THE government of the world is in the hands of CHRIST.

As God supreme he hath an unalienable right to govern and dispose all things as he pleaseth. As Mediator, this high office is delegated to him of the Father, and with this he is wholly entrusted. To the truth of which the sacred oracles give ample testimony. Thus the prophet Isaiah speaking of this glorious

rious Immanuel, and to whom he ascribes the proper titles of Deity, declares that "*on his shoulder the government should be.*"*—The government not of the Church only; but of the world: For he sits not only as "*king on his holy hill of Sion,*" but this "*Lord most high*" is expressly said to be "*king over all the earth.*"† This divine person, when on earth, declared of himself that "*all things*" were "*delivered*" to him of his "*Father.*" And that "*the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.*"‡ of CHRIST it is also foretold that he "*should be great,*" and that "*the Lord God should give him the throne of his father David*"—that "*he should reign for ever, and of his kingdom there should be no end.*"§ And we are assured that this same JESUS "*being raised from the dead, is seated at the Father's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world and that which is to come; that all things are put under his feet, and he is made head over all things to the Church.*"||

THUS it appears that CHRIST being God, equal with the Father, has in that character a just claim to absolute and universal monarchy. And as mediator is appointed, and ordained king and Judge of the world. I proceed to observe,

II. THAT this providential dominion and government of our divine LORD is universal.

THE subjects of it are all the works of his hands. It is not limited to this, but extends to all worlds, creatures and things.

AND it is both fitting and necessary, that he who formed, should govern and dispose all things, since the

* Isaiah ix. 6.

† Psalm ii. 6. & xlvii. 2. Both these Psalms evidently refer to the Kingdom of CHRIST.

‡ Mat. xi. 27. John. v. 22.

§ Luke i. 32, 33.

|| Eph. i. 20, 21, 22.

the same divine wisdom and power must be employed in the latter, as were displayed in the former. Nay, the direction, support and preservation of creatures and things are, in scripture, represented but as a continued creation, and ascribed to the same almighty agent. "*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor and power: For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*" Not only *were* but *are* created.

HERE let us expatiate in our meditations, on the extent of CHRIST's providential government: And

I. IT hath respect to the heavenly state, and is immediately conversant with those superior beings who live in that upper world—their support, employments and happiness. CHRIST JESUS reigns in Heaven. The innumerable hosts above are all his servants, he upholds them in their high stations, assigns their different posts, appoints their various exercises, and directs all their motions.

THEY are the ministers of his pleasure, ever on the wing to execute the intentions of his will. Often are they sent down to our world on designs the most benevolent to the children of men.

"*Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*"*

II. CHRIST's dominion reaches the darksome realms below.

THERE his awful presence, his powerful justice, and vindictive wrath, are display'd in flaming colours.

THOSE accursed fiends, who inhabit that dismal abyss, are permitted indeed to rove invisibly through this earth. Their malevolent prince is suffered to hold empire in this world: "*He reigns in the hearts of the children of disobedience,*" instigating them to numberless acts of rebellion. But be it remembered, that Satan, with all his infernal legions, are under the
B immediate

immediate controul of the King of heaven. Their power is bounded. Their implicable, restless rage receives divine check. He who with infinite ease manages earth and hell, says to the fierce spirits of the latter, as to the impetuous ocean, "*hitherto shall thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.*"

IN short, the devil and his agents act by permission; nor will they be permitted to proceed in their wicked attempts, any further than the wisdom of Providence will overrule for the advancement of the divine glory, and the everlasting good of the redeemed: All which will be declared, at the final issue of CHRIST's administration.

THE providential government of the SON of GOD, extends to this world.

THE various parts, the numerous creatures and things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, of which it is composed, were not only created by his power, but all arranged and disposed by his wisdom, and directed in all their operations and movements, by the secret energy of his providence. For this likewise the oracles of revelation give full suffrage.

THUS in the phenomena of nature, and in all events and operations, through the natural world, the scriptures teach us to look up to him as the first cause of all, and religiously acknowledge and adore his hand.

HE it is who "*causes the vapors to ascend—who spreads the Heavens with clouds, and prepares rain for the earth—who saith to the snow be thou upon the earth, likewise to the small rain and the great rain of his strength.*"

By the breath of God frost is given, and the breadth of the waters is straightened. By watering he wearieth the thick cloud; he scattereth the bright cloud; it is turned about by his counsels, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them, on the face of the world in the earth.

He

He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy."

WHEN the lightnings play—when the thunders send forth their voice—when the earth trembles, and the rocks are rent—when tempests with impetuous rage sweep the forest, and lay waste the fruitful fields: These are but the effects of *his* power and providence who rules in the kingdom of nature.

THE same may be observed in respect to the animate parts of this lower creation; the inferior living creatures of this earth. These are all the care, and at the disposal of him, who "*giveth to all, life and breath, and all things.*" "*The eyes of all these wait on him, and he giveth them their meat in due season.*"

BUT the divine government and providence, in a peculiar manner, respects the moral world. It is especially exercised over and in behalf of the children of men. It orders and overrules all events and circumstances, great and minute, concerning them.

THE supreme LORD of all in positive terms, asserts his sovereign dominion over his intelligent creatures of this world, and claims the sole prerogative of appointing and dispensing all the good and all the evil of which they are the subjects: "*I am the Lord and there is none else: I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things.*"* "*Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?*"†

CHRIST, who is this Lord Jehovah, is, as we before said, not only "*king in Sion,*" but is "*king over all the earth.*" By him "*kings reign and princes decree justice.*"

THE foundation, growth and establishment of kingdoms, states and empires, with the mighty changes and revolutions which take place in them, are from his providence, who "*doth whatsoever he pleaseth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.*"

THE

* Isaiah xlv. 5.

† Amos iii. 7 .7.

THE great, the mighty and the honourable, owe all their greatness, and derive all their power and dignity from him who is "*higher than the highest.*" "*Promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*"*

NOR is the divine government confined to princes and potentates, and the great affairs of states and kingdoms; but is extended to the conditions, minute concerns, and actions of individuals; and those of the lowest, as well as of the highest rank.

"*He hath determined the bounds of each one's habitation. In his hand is our breath, and his are all our ways.*"

THE time of our birth—the place, of our residence—the means, manner, and moment of our death, are all appointed by the Sovereign Arbiter of life and death. So are all the various circumstances, conditions, and vicissitudes through which we pass in life. The various, multiplied, and undeserved blessings, of which we are made so liberally to partake, are but so many streams flowing from the inexhaustible fountain of all good, and should be traced to their divine source.

NOR, on the other hand, are we to imagine, that "*afflictions come out of the ground, or spring from the dust.*"

HOWEVER instruments and second causes may operate in bringing evils upon us, yet it must be remembered, that these are *but* instruments which can effect nothing, only by the direction and appointment of him who "*worketh all things,*" by a secret energy, "*according to the counsel of his own will.*"

JOB experienced a remarkable reverse of condition; in effecting which, beside the hand of Satan, there were employed a number of other wicked instruments. Yet that holy man most religiously acknowledged

* Psalm lxxv. 6, 7.

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knowledgeth and adoreth a divine and invisible agency in all that had befallen him.

*"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."**

Do we receive injurious treatment from men, by which our person, name, or estate is grievously affected? This is but the rod in God's hand, by which he justly correcteth and punisheth us for our sins against him.

Do we meet with losses and disappointments? These may be falsely imputed to chance, or ranked among the number of human casualties; but they are the wise allotments of an holy providence.

ARE we brought low by sickness, and *"chastened with pain on our bed, and the multitude of our bones with strong pain?"*—A variety of second causes may be assigned; yet a divine hand is to be acknowledged. Diseases are God's servants, sent on some important design.

ONCE more. Death comes up into our windows, and takes from our arms the dearest of our earthly delights.

Is this a random blow? The fatal arrow had its commission. It was directed to its mark by an unerring hand, it executes the purpose before decreed. *"The Lord hath done it. Be still and know that he is God"*

THUS we see that the government of the world is in the hands of CHRIST—and that it is universal. I proceed to shew,

III. WHAT evidence there is that it is administered in the best manner.

THIS at once appears from the perfection of the agent.

THE creator and governor of the world is a being, not only all powerful, but infinitely wise, holy, just and good. These attributes are essential to him who

who made, and governs all things. All his operations must therefore correspond with his nature. They are but a transcript of his perfections.

To suppose that the Almighty Jehovah ever doth wrong, is to suppose that he either cannot, or will not, do right. But let such a blasphemous thought never enter our hearts.

It was the eternal word that framed the universe, and therefore it was wisely framed. "*He made the earth by his power, established the world by his wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by his understanding.*" The same almighty, holy and good being, governeth the world; and therefore it is well governed. Infinite wisdom cannot err. It ever proposeth the best ends, and chooseth the best means for the accomplishment of them. Almighty power cannot be resisted or controuled in any of its operations: And therefore whatever the divine wisdom proposeth, divine power will effect, and in the most suitable time and way. From the perfect rectitude of God's nature, we necessarily infer the perfection of his administrations and works.

AND now if the LORD JESUS CHRIST is a being possessed of such perfections, and these are exercised and displayed in creation and providence, which undoubtedly is the case, then we must conclude that all his works and ways are perfect—that this Judge of all the earth cannot but do right.

HAVING, I hope, in some measure illustrated and proved the doctrine, let us proceed to some suitable improvement of what has been offered.

THE subject is fruitful, of much instruction, admonition, and comfort.

IN the first place, this subject tends to beget in our minds the highest conceptions of the Redeemer.

He appears, from what hath been shewn from the sacred oracles, to possess the place, and exercise the authority of God Supreme.

He

HE is exhibited before us as an almighty, independent, and universal monarch, having all power in heaven and earth :—As creating, superintending, and disposing all creatures and things, according to the counsel of his own will ; and ever acting in the wisest and best manner possible.

THIS view of the Son of God fills the heavenly hosts, with sentiments of the highest respect for that divine person, and draws from them expressions of divine praise and adoration. John, in vision, saw a multitude of those celestial spirits around the throne, and falling down at the feet of him who sits upon it, saying, “ *worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.*”

WE on earth have equal reason to worship and adore that almighty and glorious being.

FROM a view of his absolute supremacy and universal dominion, considering that he is “ *over all and above all ; and that of him, and thro’ him, and to him, are all things,*” we may with the utmost propriety adopt the noble ascription of the king of Israel. 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12 : “ *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the majesty : For all that is in the heaven, and in the earth, is thine ; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all ; both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all, and in thy hand is power and might ; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*”

THUS the present subject, by the sanction of scripture, teacheth us to entertain exalted conceptions of the character of CHRIST, and to “ *honor him even as we honor the father.*”

AND the belief of the essential Deity of CHRIST our Immanuel, will serve to afford full satisfaction to our minds, respecting the all sufficiency of his atonement, the infinite value and efficacy of his mediation and intercession, in the character of God-man.

VERILY

VERILY the Father hath laid help on one mighty to save. So that the most guilty of Adam's fallen race, have the utmost encouragement to look to the Saviour; and with full confidence to trust in his merits and righteousness, for pardon and acceptance.

SECONDLY. The doctrine of CHRIST's supremacy, and universal dominion, is matter of joy and triumph to all holy and benevolent beings.

"The Lord reigneth:" It follows, *"let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof."* *"The children of Sion"* may well *"rejoice in their king,"* and joyfully join the hosts above, saying, *"alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."*

THE faithful followers of the lamb may derive abundant consolation from a belief that their Lord and Redeemer, is King of kings, and Lord of lords; that he is exalted head over all; sits enthroned above; superintends the universe; orders and overrules all things in infinite wisdom, righteousness, and goodness; and that he will reign for ever and ever.

BUT there are those who dare oppose the government of JEHOVAH; who are not willing that this God-man *"should reign over them;"* or that he should reign at all. And to such foolish creatures the doctrine advanced, administers matter of terror and trembling: For the Lord Almighty will reign *maugre* all the opposition of earth and hell. Men and devils may fret and rage.—These may combine their united strength, and employ all their policy, against the kingdom of CHRIST, but it will prove utterly abortive.

"He who sitteth in the heavens will laugh: The Lord will have them in derision; he will speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

"Be wise therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges," and all ye people of *"the earth. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.,"*

What madness is it to resist the government of Heaven! What folly for impotent worms to rise against

gainst an omnipotent arm ! " *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth ; but woe to him who striveth with his maker.* "

As easily may you overturn the mountains, or annihilate the universe as alter a single determination of the divine will.

Thirdly. From the truths illustrated in the preceding discourse we are led devoutly to contemplate a divine agency, in all the works and transactions that we behold ; and not to censure providence on account of the *seeming* disorders, defects, and evils, that are in the world.

We think that we discern many blemishes in creation and providence ; and there is truly much of what is called natural and moral evil. Wicked men, and wicked spirits, are perpetually perpetrating iniquity, and doing mischief ; and there are many jarring passions, interfering interests, &c. On account of these, and things of a similar kind, some have dared to arraign the divine government, while others have presumed to deny a divine providence and agency. But it is owing to the imbecility of our understandings, and the contractedness of our present views, that men are led to such conclusions.

" THOSE events," as a late elegant writer observes, which viewed apart, appear as spots in the divine administration, when considered in connection with all their consequences, are found to give it additional lustre. The beauty and magnificence of the universe are much heightened, by its being an extensive and complicated system ; in which a variety of springs are made to play, and a multitude of different movements are with most admirable art, regulated and kept in order.

" WHILE among the multitude that dwell on the face of the earth, some are submissive to the divine authority ; some rise up in rebellion against it ; others absorbed in their pleasure and pursuits are totally inattentive to it ; they are all so moved by

“ an imperceptible influence from above, that the zeal
 “ of the dutiful, the wrath of the rebellious, and the
 “ indifference of the careless, contribute finally to
 “ the glory of God.

“ ALL are governed in such a way as suits their
 “ powers, and is consistent with rational freedom;
 “ yet all are subjected to the necessity of fulfilling the
 “ eternal purposes of Heaven. The depth of the
 “ divine wisdom in the administration of the universe,
 “ exceeds all human comprehension, and affords
 “ everlasting subject of adoration and praise.” *

Thus he—

WICKED men are the unconscious ministers of Providence. Governed as they are by their own disordered passions and affections, and while seeking to gratify the pride and ambition of their own depraved hearts, still they are so far influenced and restrained by a superior power, in all their projections and pursuits, as to be subservient to the accomplishment of the wise and good purposes of heaven: “ *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*”

AND all the trials by which good men are exercised in the present life, either *mediately* by instruments, or more *immediately* by the hand of God, will eventually farther their own good and his glory. In short, the Wise Governor of the universe will so direct and overrule causes and effects, and all events, as to bring good out of evil, and order out of confusion.

HOWEVER gloomy to our present view, the aspect of things may now appear; however dark and intricate some events may seem; yet we may rest assured that a BEING, perfectly wise and holy, sits at helm; and tho’ “ *his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters,*” yet all his administrations are perfectly right and good. And there is a day at hand when all mysterious providences will be unfolded,

the rectitude of the divine government fully displayed, and clear light thrown on all the works and ways of God. Hence

Fourthly, THERE is the utmost reason that we should cheerfully acquiesce in all the disposals of providence, even such as are most painful and distressing to nature.

A BEING all wise, faithful, and kind, orders all events, metes out our changes, and appoints our lot. He is indeed the author and framer of the rod by which we smart. He sends disease and death into our families, cuts off our pleasing hopes, and casts us down into the depth of grief; but nevertheless he *"does all things well."* *"As for God, his work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."* Let this thought calm our minds to peace.

BUT I am brought to the mournful occasion on which we are at this time assembled, which demands our solemn attention, and rightly to improve which, will require the aids of religion, with the practical belief of those important truths, on which we have been meditating.

A SOVEREIGN God, all holy and righteous, has seen fit, in a sudden, unexpected manner, to remove from this world, our dear, much valued friend, whose society might have been longer enjoyed; and whose presence, direction and advice, appeared in our view, much needed, as it was greatly desired, especially by the loving consort, and numerous, affectionate offspring of the deceased.* But infinite wisdom, for wise purposes unknown to us, has been pleased at one fatal stroke, to blast these pleasing expectations, and given occasion to surviving friends not to complain, but to bemoan their heavy loss. The former religion forbids; the latter it surely allows in a moderate degree.

* Mrs. LEAVITT was the parent of eleven promising sons, and one amiable daughter; all of which, excepting one, followed their mother to the grave.

To withhold, on an occasion so distressing, the tear of sympathy, would shew that we were destitute of the feelings of humanity, and strangers to the more tender sensations that christianity inspires. To grieve when smitten of God and afflicted—to discover suitable tokens of sorrow under grievous and calamitous strokes of the divine hand is not merely allowable: It is commendable. At the grave of his friend Lazarus "*Jesus wept.*" His example gives sanction to our tears on similar occasions.

BUT our sorrows must be bound by reason and religion.—When they exceed these limits they become faulty.

WHEN deprived of earthly blessings, it is a proper time to reflect, on the value of those enjoyments—the comfort we have derived from them—our utter unworthiness of them—and the divine equity and justice in recalling them. This will tend to promote sentiments of gratitude to the author of them, and at the same time beget an humble submission to the divine will.—

"If smiling mercy crown our lives,

"Its praises shall be spread,

"And we'll adore the justice too

"That strikes our comforts dead."

IN the present case however, to give a full detail of the various excellencies, natural and moral, possessed by our departed friend, was the preacher able, would at this time, perhaps, be too tender a subject; and might seem to favor of adulation; therefore it will not be dwelt upon; especially as the present design is not to exhibit a funeral panegyric on the *dead*; but, if possible, to administer matter of comfort and improvement to the *living*. Yet justice to the memory of Madam LEAVITT, requires that we just mention,

THAT to good natural talents, which exceeded many of her sex, she possessed and exhibited, an easy, unaffected, soft and most engaging temper and deportment; which gave a lustre to the beauty of her

her person far superior to what it could have derived from the most brilliant ornaments of art. She was of a kind, tender, and peaceful spirit. These amiable virtues, being as we believe sanctified by divine grace, and joined with the christian graces of humility, meekness, patience, and that wisdom which is from above, enabled her to fill the station, and discharge the duties allotted her by providence, with honor to herself, and advantage to others; and made her beloved and admired by all.

WITH how much discretion she managed her domestic concerns—how her wise precepts and amiable examples allured her offspring to order and virtue—what a faithful, dutiful *wife*—what a tender attentive *parent*—what an obliging, courteous and entertaining *friend* she was, they can best tell who knew her in those characters, and are ready to testify. *Her children*, at least, “*will rise up and call her blessed,—her husband, and he will praise her.*”

Or this valuable person we are now deprived.—She has run her race, finished her course, and is removed to another, we hope to a better, state of existence.

AND what remains but that we labor to imitate whatever was excellent in her life, and to improve by her death.

It is especially our hearty wish that the sorrowful relatives may reap saving benefit *from*, and receive divine supports *under*, this sorely afflictive dispensation.

To this bereaved family permit me to address a few words : And first to him who is become the lonely head of it :

REVEREND SIR,

OUR long friendship,—the christian and ministerial relation which has subsisted between us, with the esteem and particular affection I bore to your family, and to her who is now removed from it, give me a more than common share in the loss it has sustained,

ON

On this occasion I feel more need of *receiving*, than qualified to *give*, advice and comfort; and should rather have chosen to take a place in the train of silent mourners, than stand as the public monitor of this mournful day. But in compliance with your request, I have attempted to speak in God's name: And may his blessing attend what in great weakness *has*, or *may* be suggested, agreeably to his word.

DEAR Sir, never having experienced the same affliction, I pretend not to realize your present feelings; yet, being acquainted with grief, I am able in a degree to mourn and sympathize with you; as I doubt not do many others.

EARTHLY friends may do this: And it is some alleviation of the weight of sorrow; but none, excepting the ever living, almighty friend, can afford those divine teachings and supports which your present circumstances require. This cup we must believe is filled with bitterness—this stroke surely is heavy—the wound deep—and the *breach wide as the sea*.—The dear wife of your youth—the fond friend of your bosom—the beloved partner of your joys and griefs,—one with whom you have lived so many years in bonds of the strictest friendship—whom you had reason to esteem and love, and who made equal returns of affection,—in short, what you doubtless considered the richest earthly blessing, is taken from you and from the world, by the inexorable hand of death.—

AND will nature now be ready to rise, and expostulate thus with its divine author?—Why was this so untimely stroke?—Why might I not have enjoyed my companion a little longer, to be a solace in the various cares and labors of life, and an assistant in the government and nurture of a numerous offspring?—Why was her race cut short in the midst?—Why am I thus left alone, pressed with double cares?

SUCH

SUCH repinings, you will not indulge; nor dare to impeach the righteous disposals of unerring wisdom.—On the contrary: Reason and revelation will suggest considerations, abundantly sufficient to calm your troubled breast, and reduce your agitated mind to silent submission; yea to thankful acquiescence in the will of heaven; and you will see cause, even in this trying scene, to adopt the sentiment of our text, and say, “*The master has done all things well:*” Has not the sovereign proprietor of the universe a right to do what he will with his own? Have you not often, sir, in your most serious moments, acknowledged his right to all you possess; and by an express covenant act, surrendered yourself and dearest enjoyments into his hands, referring it to him to dispose of you and yours as his wisdom should think best?

AND as to the much valued blessing of which you are now deprived—Was you not entirely indebted to the unmerited goodness of your great benefactor for the bestowment of it; for making her so great a comfort, and continuing her so long? and farther, Have you not reason to hope that *your* loss is *her* unspeakable gain? A disinterested regard then to *her* happiness, is an additional motive to quiet and content your mind.

AND now my dear brother, let me invite you to mount with me on the wings of faith and holy contemplation, to yonder spacious regions where the spirit, the better part of your beloved partner, has taken her flight.

SEE her entering the blissful abodes of glory! “*her robes washed and made white in the blood of the lamb!*”—hear the happifying plaudit of her judge!—see how the gates of the celestial city display their leaves to give entrance to the welcome stranger!—observe the joyous congratulations of her fellow angels!—behold her joining the enraptured throng of heavenly

heavenly hosts, in their never ceasing songs of praise!—and look forward; extend a view to that solemn, all glorious period, when the returning Redeemer shall descend from heaven in radiant splendor, with myriads of attending angels and saints!—hear the sound of the last trump!—behold the heavens and earth passing away with a great noise!—see the graves opening!—the dead in CHRIST rising; rising glorious and immortal.—And among the rest, those lifeless remains, over which you now weep and which we are about to commit to the darksome tomb.—See! the demolished fabric reared anew, and infinitely improved in beauty, activity, and vigor.—Behold this corruptible putting on incorruption—this mortal, immortality!—hear the triumphant song, O! death where is thy sting? O! grave where is thy victory?

To the above reflections, which are also designed to minister consolation to the bereaved children, I must however add a few words more:

My dear young friends,

CONSIDERING the occasion, we cannot wonder to see you thus bathed in tears, and your tender hearts throbbing with grief; nor can we refrain bearing a part in your present sorrow. This is a tribute due to the memory of that excellent parent, whose face you must see, whose voice you must hear, no more!—but while you give vent to your tears, you must suppress all heart risings against the supreme disposer of events.

THE LORD has wise and holy ends in all that he doth.

WE are assured “*he doth not afflict willingly,*” nor, without good reason, “*grieve the children of men.*” God most holy has done you no wrong: He means you the richest good if you will receive it at his hand; Even this severe discipline is fraught with heavenly instruction. It teaches you more forcibly,

forcibly, than language can describe,—the evil of sin—the extreme frailty of life—the exceeding uncertainty, and fleeting nature of all sublunary enjoyments—It leads your thoughts to things future and eternal.—It shews the vast importance of withdrawing your affections from earthly, and placing them on heavenly, objects: And of looking beyond this transitory world, for substantial and durable happiness; and choosing that part which shall never be taken from you.—

It is our ardent prayer that you thus profit by this sore visitation. And while you humble yourselves under this rebuke of God's hand, be not forgetful of his mercies. Have you not reason to be thankful that you were so long blessed with a mother so excellent? and tho' she is removed, yet you have a tender father left to guide and direct you. Be ye the support and comfort of his declining age.—How will it rejoice his heart to behold in you a resemblance of those virtues, which shone so bright in your parent deceased? Yet is there a far higher pattern which you are to copy, viz. That of her and your Divine Saviour. O! be ye the followers of CHRIST. Approve yourselves the dutiful and obedient children of that heavenly parent, who hath said, "*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*"

"I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

A word to this assembly shall close the discourse.

How changeable is this world in which we live!—How precarious and perishing are all earthly enjoyments!—How uncertain is the present life!—On what a brittle thread doth it hang!—How solemn! how awful is death!—How soon will our eyes be closed to all mortal things!—It

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becomes

becomes us then not to be inordinately attached to,
or too deeply affected by, the various and different
scenes and events which here take place.

"This I say, brethren, the time is short. It remain-
eth that both they that have wives be as though they
had none; and they that weep as though they wept not:
And they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not: And
they that buy as though they possessed not: And they that
use this world, as not abusing it: For the fashion of
this world passeth away." AMEN.

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